

Christ Church  
3116 O Street, N.W.  
Washington (Georgetown)  
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-243

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
National Park Service  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D.C. 20240

## CHRIST CHURCH

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Location: 3116 O Street, N.W. (Georgetown), southwest corner of 31st and O Streets (formerly Congress and Beall Streets), Washington, D. C.

Present Owner and Occupant: Christ Church

Present Use: Episcopal Church

Statement of Significance: Christ Church was founded in 1817 by a small group of prominent Georgetown citizens. Throughout the nineteenth century, many of Georgetown's businessmen, merchants and government officials worshipped there. The present structure, completed in 1887, is a fine example of late nineteenth-century Gothic adaptation.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The present structure was begun in 1886 and completed in 1887.
2. Architect: Cassell and Laws.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building is located in Square 1243, lot 51 (formerly Square 73). The following is an incomplete chain of title to the property. The references are to the Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

1817 Deed. March 28, 1817, recorded July 10, 1817 in  
Liber A0 folio 245  
William Darnes, executor of estate of  
Charles Gassaway  
to  
John Peter  
Lot 51; 120' on Congress, 60' on Beall Street

1820 Deed. November 19, 1820, recorded May 3, 1821 in  
Liber AZ folio 366  
John Peter  
to

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Clement Smith  
John S. Haws  
Charles A. Burnett, Trustees of Christ Church  
Consideration: \$2,000

"...on which said church now has a house of worship..."

1887 Instrument of Donation May 23, 1887, recorded  
May 26, 1887 in Liber 1257 folio 202  
Albert R. Steward, Rector  
William Knowles )  
Benjamin Wheatley) Wardens

William Laird, Jr. )  
Samuel E. Wheatley )  
Maurice J. Adler )  
William B. Orme ) Vestrymen  
W. Bowie Tyler )  
Charles M. Mathews )  
J. Holdsworth Gordon)  
George T. Dunlop )

to

Right Reverend William Paret, D.D., L.L.D.,  
Bishop of Maryland

"We the Rector, Church Wardens and Vestrymen of  
Christ Church Parish, Georgetown, in the District  
of Columbia in the diocese of Maryland, being by  
the good Providence of Almighty God in possession  
of two houses of worship being a Church and a  
Chapel erected upon lot 51 in Beall's addition to  
Georgetown in the District of Columbia and desiring  
the same to be solemnly set apart and consecrated  
to His service, do hereby request the Right Reverend  
William Paret, D.D., L.L.D., Bishop of Maryland, to  
take the same under his spiritual jurisdiction, and  
that of his successors in office and to consecrate  
the same by the name of "Christ Church, in Christ  
Church Parish, Georgetown, District of Columbia..."

4. Original plans and construction: None known.

5. Alterations and additions: The main chapel is in  
relatively unaltered form. Electric lights were in-  
stalled in 1911. In 1923 the Rector's study and Sunday  
School rooms to the west of the Church were added. In  
1967 a new chapel was built to the west of the Church.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

1. History of the Church:

In 1811 St. John's Church was the only Episcopal place of

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worship in Georgetown. The Church had become so crowded "that even gallery seats rented at high rates." (Dorsey, p. 5.) The Church membership was unable to organize to plan an increase in capacity. Therefore, on November 10, 1818, a group of church members, all prominent Georgetown citizens, met at the home of Mr. Thomas Corcoran on Bridge Street (now 3213 M Street) "for the purpose of organizing a new congregation and devising a plan for building an additional Protestant Episcopal Church."

The members of this founding group included: Thomas Corcoran, Clement Smith, Francis Scott Key, John S. Haw, John Myers, Ulyses Ward, James A. Magruder, William Morton, Thomas Henderson and John Pickerell. Twenty-six pew holders signed the original agreement. The services of Reverend Ruel Keith, formerly assistant pastor at St. John's, were engaged. The first services of the newly formed congregation were held at the Lancaster School Building on Beall Street (now O Street), December 13, 1817.

Building of the first church on the site at the corner of Beall and Congress Street was begun May 6, 1818. Minutes of the Potomac Lodge No. 5, A.F. and A.M. dated Tuesday May 12, 1818, record that on the previous day "...a Master Mason's lodge was opened and a procession formed which moved to the Lancaster School where the clergy and citizens joined and then proceeded to the appointed spot where the cornerstone was laid in due form."

There are no records of details of the erection of the building until December 25, 1818: "The new congregation assembled in the new church this day at sunrise; after prayer to the Throne of Grace dismissed." The church was consecrated on the thirtieth of December, and the name Christ Church used for the first time. Total cost for the building, including the lot, was \$15,952. It was the largest Episcopal Church in the District.

Little is known stylistically about the church except that it had "an elevated pulpit in the center of the chancel with a simple marble-topped communion table beneath it. Opposite was a gallery where in 1822 two members of the vestry were stationed 'for the purpose of keeping order.'" (Dorsey, p. 6.) The church contained seventy pews.

The 1830 City Directory describes Christ Church:

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The new Protestant Episcopal church called Christ Church is a very neat and substantial brick building situated on the corner of Beall and Congress Streets, fronting on the former...

In 1835 a "Wren-type" steeple was added to the building.

The Pew List of 1847 names the following holders:

Addison, Berry, Cassin, Corcoran, Cox, Dodge, Davidson, Gordon, Hyde, Linthicum, Mackall, Mathews, Marbury, Morsell, Redin, Ridgely, and Baron Alexander Bodisco, Imperial Russian Minister.

This list includes many of Georgetown's most prominent citizens.

The Evening Star (Washington, D.C.), August 24, 1853, reports the following alterations:

The congregation of Christ (Episcopal) Church intend commencing on the first of the ensuing month to remodel and greatly beautify the interior of their edifice. The old fashioned galleries are to be...improved, so as to furnish that portion of the congregation who usually sit there more comfort and convenience. The whole is to be newly painted and the old organ is to be removed to give place to one of larger dimension and stronger, sweeter tones.

These changes were completed by the end of September, (The Evening Star, September 27, 1853):

Christ Church (Episcopal), which has for several weeks been in the hands of workmen, undergoing some repairs and alterations, has been completed, and is again ready for religious worship.

The church building remained unchanged until 1867, when it became necessary to remodel and expand the church. A sum of \$28,000 was appropriated. During remodeling, the congregation frequently worshipped in the Presbyterian church (probably the one that stood at 30th and M Streets).

The appearance of the original church is described by Dorsey, p. 13:

The classic beauty of the original structure was obscured by typical alterations and encrustations of the Victorian period. As remodeled, the main auditorium occupied the second floor which was reached by two stairways from below. The choir and organ occupied a gallery built across the rear of the church. The first floor was devoted to Sunday School purposes and the graceful Wren Steeple was replaced by a squat tower at the northeast corner of the edifice.

City officials authorized the lowering of the grades of both Congress and Beall Streets in 1873. This change in street level necessitated the building of retaining walls and additional steps which impaired the use of the church. The need for a new and larger structure became more and more pressing. In 1885 the vestry decided to erect a new structure. "Plans for a brick Gothic structure drawn by the architectural firm of Cassell and Laws, and a construction bid by William C. Morrison of \$38,300 were accepted." The last services held in the old church were July 12, 1885. The Washington Post of the same date describes the church:

Old it looks in every way. The ivy in its prolific growth has even partially screened the windows, infringed upon the doorways and made a green bush of the stone cross on the summit. The green paint of the doors has crackled under the heat of the sun and scaled off... Altogether there is a deserted appearance about the building; it seems to be the survival of an old village church of long ago.

The cornerstone of the present church was laid on October 1, 1885; the building was completed and consecrated June 2, 1887. "Architecturally this new church was a gem, a miniature cathedral, its exterior most pleasing to the eye, while its interior, with its stone Gothic arches colored by the rays from the memorial windows, tributes to the memories of the pioneers of early life of the church..." (Historical Sketches of the Parishes and Missions in the Diocese of Washington, pp. 45-48.)

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An electric carillon was donated to the church in 1959 with a total volume equivalent to 100,000 pounds of cast bells. A new organ, installed in 1947, was dedicated by Paul Callaway; another organ is being installed in the summer of 1969.

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To the south of the main church is Keith Hall, named in honor of the first minister. This was originally the parish hall and is now used as a meeting room. In 1957 the church purchased Linthicum Hall which is a building dating to 1887. This is now used as the parish hall. On November 8, 1964, Christ Church was designated an historic landmark by the Washington Joint Committee on Landmarks.

2. The Memorial Windows:

The interior of Christ Church is illuminated by stained glass windows. The windows were made in Munich, Germany, and installed by German workmen. All are memorials to earlier members of the congregation.

Their iconographic program, beginning at the altar with the nave windows on the west (Epistle) side, is as follows:

The Calling of the Brothers  
Christ and the Centurion  
Christ with Mary and Martha  
The Good Shepherd (Memorial to John Marbury)  
David Playing the Harp to King Saul, on the  
right, and  
Ruth and Boaz, on the left.

The east nave windows show scenes from the gospels:

Christ Healing (Memorial to Dr. Grafton Tyler)  
The Presentation in the Temple  
Agony in the Garden

Clerestory windows beginning at the altar on the Epistle side are:

St. Luke, St. Paul and St. Mark  
St. Bartholomew, St. Philip and St. Andrew  
An Angel, St. Michael, and Another Angel  
St. Simon, St. Mathias and St. Jude  
Aaron, Miriam and Moses (Memorial to Francis  
Scott Key)

Clerestory windows beginning at the altar on the Gospel side are:

Lydia, St. Stephen and Dorcas  
St. James, St. John and St. Peter  
An Angel, St. Gabriel and another Angel (memorial to Benjamin F. Miller)  
St. Thomas, St. Matthew and St. James

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The central windows, north side, show scenes from the life of Christ:

Upper left	The Baptism of Christ by John
Lower left, left side	Christ after the Temptation
Lower left, right side	The Sermon on the Mount
Upper center	The Ascension
Lower center, left side	The Adoration
Lower center, center	The Crucifixion
Upper right	The Last Supper
Lower right, left side	Christ Blessing the Children
Lower right, right side	The Healing of the Blind

The windows on the east side of the vestibule show an angel crowning a kneeling woman, and Christ Raising the Daughters of Jairus.

The round windows at the south end of the nave above the altar show the Dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, and at the north end a similar window with the Lamb, the symbol of the risen Christ.

The sculpted wooden figures in the recesses of the altar are Matthew, Mark, Luke and John with angels at both ends.

3. Henry Laws, architect:

No information has been found on Henry Laws or the firm of Cassell and Laws except that Laws had an office at 1425 New York Avenue, N.W., rooms 204 and 205, according to the 1889 Business Directory.

4. Pastors of the Church:

1817 Ruel Keith  
1820 C. P. McIlvaine  
1825 H. H. Grey  
1829 John Thompson Brooke  
1835 Philip Slaughter  
1838 John F. Hoff



1843	Stephen G. Gassaway
1851	David Caldwell
1854	William Norwood, D.D.
1864	J. H. C. Bonte
1866	Walter W. Williams, D.D.
1876	Albert Rhett Stuart, D.D.
1903	James H. W. Blake
1924	E. Pinkney Wroth
1930	John Temple
1935	Joseph Gillespie Armstrong
1941	Peyton R. Williams
1944	John Raymond Anschutz, D.D.

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C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None found.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources: District of Columbia Deed Books, Recorder of Deeds, Washington, D.C.

b. Secondary and unpublished sources:

Dorsey, Stephen P. Historical Christ Church in Georgetown. Washington, D.C.: Christ Church, 1949.

Historical Sketches of the Parishes and Missions in the Diocese of Washington. Washington, D.C.: Protestant Episcopal Church in the U.S.A., National Council, Women's Auxiliary, Washington Branch, 1928.

The Evening Star (Washington, D.C.). August 24, September 27, 1853.

The Washington Post, July 12, 1885.

Prepared by Ellen J. Schwartz  
Architectural Historian  
Commission of Fine Arts  
August 1969

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This late nineteenth-century Gothic church designed by Henry Laws in 1885 is one of

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the most distinguished pieces of architecture in Georgetown.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is excellently maintained inside and out. The only significant changes have been minor remodeling in Keith Hall, and the addition of a wing and a new chapel west of the Church proper.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The church itself measures about 90' x 60' with the old parish hall (Keith Hall) at the south end measuring about 30' x 60'. At the northeast corner of the church is a tall bell tower. On the east side of the church the aisle door and the altar (or choir) section project out to the sidewalk line. West of Keith Hall and the altar and transept sections of the church is an addition for kitchen and offices (1923) and a modern chapel (1967). The church has a three-bay facade consisting of one main story. The tower to the east has three floors, plus a two-level open belfry.
2. Foundations: The brick wall extends to grade, with a water table about 20" above the ground level. In the basement, the rear wall of the church proper is 17" thick, while dividing walls of brick under the tower are 27-1/2" thick with arched doorways. At the north end of the basement under the front wall of the church are some iron beams. At the southwest corner, in the cellar just to the west of Keith Hall, are huge boulders or outcroppings.
3. Wall construction: Walls are of red smooth-face brick in common bond, with headers every eight or nine courses. The original mortar is pink. There has been some re-bricking around the two first-floor tower windows (east side). The spandrel above the entrance door in the north face of the tower (below the horizontal stone splash course) is filled with diaper work in red terracotta matching the brickwork. The squares contain eight-pointed stars.

There is also considerable wall decoration in yellow sandstone. This is used for window sills, buttress caps, corner blocks at gable and dormer ends, door enframements, the splash course over the tower entrance, the north gable finial and cross, gable copings for the main church and the aisle dormers (though most of this stonework is now covered with a protective sheet of lead),

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and for the steps to the doorways. In Keith Hall this sandstone is also used around the east windows, and for the coping of the gable wall. It is likewise used for the basement window lintels, and the coping of the areaway at the southeast corner of the church. The cornerstone, located in the northeast corner of the tower, is decorated with a cross in each corner, the labarum in the center, and the text ". Christ Church./ A.D. 1885." below. Another sandstone block, inserted in the west wall of the nave, is inscribed "Christ Church./A.D. 1818." Above it is a small bronze plaque which reads, "This, the cornerstone of the/original Christ Church, was placed/ here on May 5, 1968 during services/commemorating the one hundred/fiftieth anniversary of the parish."

4. Framing: The walls are load bearing brick, with wooden roof trusses and wooden flooring.
5. Porches, stoops, bulkheads, etc.: The tower doorway (see 7. a. below) has a deep enframingent which could be considered a porch. At the northwest corner of the church, behind a buttress, is a circular iron coal-chute cover.
6. Chimneys: There is a square brick chimney at the northwest corner of the church with a flat cap, and openings at the east and west sides only. At the northeast corner of the east transept is another chimney with the top corbeled in, in two tiers. A third chimney, located at the northwest corner of Keith Hall, has much cruder brickwork and a concrete cap. A small chimney (or ventilator?) is located at the gable end of the west extension. (This side is very similar in form to the east face of Keith Hall, but is actually opposite the altar section of the church.) This chimney, or ventilator, appears to be about a foot square. It is treated like the northwest corner chimney, with openings at the east and west only and a flat cap.
7. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The tower doorway is the most elaborate in the church. It consists of a two-leaf lancet door 60-3/4" wide, with vertical boarding and two elaborate scroll hinges (with upper and lower spiral and trefoil end) per leaf. The splayed jambs of the doorway have three attached columns on each side, with Gothic floral caps. Including cap and molded base, the columns measure 38" tall. They support a three-step molded archivolt which forms a

pointed enframing over the doorway. The door is reached by four sandstone steps, each 6-3/4" high.

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The doorway on the west end of the front facade is quite similar to the tower doorway, though it is not as tall nor as elaborate. The door itself measures 65" wide and has strap hinges similar to the tower door, but with only one, less elaborate, spiral (upward). The single column at each side is 28" tall, and supports a molded arch over the doorway. The door is reached by five stone steps. The door to the south end of the east aisle is identical to this, but has only four risers.

The street door on the east end of Keith Hall appears to be of later date. There are brick jambs, a low stone pointed arch, and a two-leaf door 58" wide, made of vertical boards with chamfered edges. Each leaf has three hinges, roughly cross-shaped, copying in a rudimentary way those on the front doors. There are four stone steps.

In an areaway on the east side are steps to a rectangular cellar door which is vertically boarded and has two simple strap hinges with heart-shaped ends. (The inside of this door is four-panel, formed by heavy stiles, rails and mullions. The center mullion measures 2" x 11".)

- b. Windows: On the north facade are the three main lancet windows, with two buttresses between them. The voussoirs are formed of two brick courses, one stretcher, the other header. Above the middle lancet is a small round window, similarly framed. On the north side of the tower are two levels of windows, a narrow lancet on the second floor, and two square slits on the third. The lancet originally had glazed panes covering the interior, which splays to an opening 32-1/2" wide. The wall here is 32" thick, and the lintel above consists of two pieces of wood, each 2-3/4" thick and 11-1/2" deep, placed above the point of the exterior opening.

On the east side, the tower has two narrow lunettes on the first floor. Considerable rebricking around them suggests that they may be a later alteration. On the third floor of the tower are two narrow slit windows. The sanctuary windows on this side consist of three aisle windows (with light green wood mullions), and twelve clerestory windows in groups of three, separated by buttresses. At the transept there is

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a lancet with two mullions. All stained-glass windows now have protective clear glass on the exterior. Keith Hall has one large east window composed of two rows of six windows in the same plain stone mullions and enframingent. Each window has twenty-eight panes in lead. Above this group is a shallow brick relieving arch of two courses of headers. In the apex of this wall are three tall slit openings with louvers. The cellar on this side has twelve-light metal windows with plain stone lintels.

The fenestration on the west side is similar to that on the east: there are five aisle windows and fifteen clerestory. At the west end of the transept and altar sections (here given a gable end) are three windows, having the same plain stone enframingent as those on the east end of Keith Hall. Each is four-over-four sash. Apparently a west-side cellar window or door was blocked up when the west garden was created, since a lintel is visible at the present grade level near the north corner.

On the south side of Keith Hall are four flat-topped dormers with two, twenty-light rectangular windows each. These are hidden from the outside because of the proximity of an adjacent wall to the south.

In the basement are stored several clear leaded-glass lancet windows and a number of interior three-leaf shutters. According to Rev. Anschutz, the shutters were removed from the parsonage next door. The windows are probably from the library which used to be on the first floor of a wing where the present chapel is located.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: There is a gable roof over the main north-south section of the church. The side aisles are covered with sloping shed roofs which rise to the nave walls. These side aisles have projecting pointed dormers over the lancet windows. The whole roof is covered with gray rectangular slate, with that on the main roof somewhat lighter in color. The altar projection to the south, and the west transept projection are gabled with standing seam metal covering, painted red. Keith Hall has an east-west gable roof in gray slate.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The gable ends have a stone coping,

now generally covered with lead. Other edges have a simple gutter. Downspouts are also visible.

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- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The side-aisle lancet windows are all in dormers with steeply pitched gable roofs. The tower at the northeast corner of the church is described above in B. 1 and B. 7. It has setback buttresses at its three exposed corners, and a north-south gable roof covered with slate. In each gable end of the tower (above the lancet openings), there is a circular opening.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The sanctuary is composed of a main north-south nave, 63'-2" long by 26'-9" wide, with lower side aisles 13'-10" wide on each side. On the east side the aisle is separated from the nave by four pointed arches on low, heavy columns; at the north end the fifth bay of this aisle comprises the entrance vestibule below the tower. The west aisle is separated by five pointed arches on similar columns, with a second entrance door at the north end in the north wall. Separated from the nave by a large pointed triumphal arch at the south end is a transept section which extends to the width of the aisles. In the east arm is the organ console and in the west, organ pipes. Beyond this is the altar (or choir) area separated from the transept section by a second large pointed arch. In the center of this area is the altar with its handsome carved wood reredos. To the east and west are sections which extend out to the aisle walls. In the eastern section are more organ pipes; the western section contains a passage back to Keith Hall, and west of this, a small robing room.

Attached to the church at the south is the former parish hall, Keith Hall, which now measures 23'-9" wide by 42'-2" long. It is 10" lower than the choir area, and is reached by two descending steps. The hall was originally divided into five bays by north-south roof trusses; now, however, the easternmost bay (9'-10" wide) is filled in by small rooms, air conditioning machinery, and two passageways to the west wing. The west wing contains a large kitchen, offices, practice rooms, and a modern chapel. Keith Hall has a small entrance vestibule at the northeast corner out to 31st Street.

In the tower, there are two enclosed floors above the entrance vestibule measuring 9'-2" by 11' 5-1/2", and two open floors above this for the bells.

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The basement is not excavated under the main part of the church. There is, however, a furnace room about 10' wide which runs the width of the church under Keith Hall; a carpentry shop under the east aisle; a store room under the tower; and an unfinished room under the northwest corner of the church, which is reached by a narrow passage along the north wall (and from which one can view the crawl space under the nave of the church).

2. Stairways: None in the original church or Keith Hall. The tower is reached by a modern wooden ladder in the vestibule. The second level of the tower is reached by a wooden ladder which appears to be of nineteenth-century date. The furnace room is reached by a straight run on eight wooden risers (modern) from the west wing.
3. Flooring: The sanctuary has 2"-wide hardwood flooring, now generally covered with green carpeting. In the basement it can be seen that the floor joists are 1-1/2" x 2-1/2", 17" on center, with cross bracing. Around 1967 the nave joists were further braced with 3-1/2" square posts set vertically in concrete footings in the crawl space. The flooring in the tower vestibule, is made up of 6"-square dark red tiles, bordered with 2-1/2" tiles. In the tower itself there are wooden floors. The flooring on the first-floor level is 2-inch pine, painted gray. The second floor, also 2-inch pine, is supported by 10" x 3" joists running north-south. The third floor (which contains some of the bells) is laid on four heavy cross beams running north-south and east-west, which are supported at each wall by two projecting granite blocks. The transept section of the church is covered with brown, tan, and dark yellow tiles laid in an octagonal pattern. The individual tiles are either hexagonal or square. This tiled area is bordered by two strips, dark red and dark brown, 3-1/4" wide. The altar area is decorated with a checkerboard pattern of yellow 6"-square tiles with dark brown squares at the corners, and cream colored dividing strips. The border is 9" wide, composed of brown, yellow, and cream colored tiles. The steps and coping of the transept section and the altar area are a light colored sandstone 10" wide. At the east side-aisle entrance the flooring consists of square brown and buff tiles, 4-1/2" square, with strip borders of red, brown, and buff. In the passage west of the choir, the flooring is 3-1/2"-wide pine.

Keith Hall has modern floors of 2-1/4"-wide hardwood. The east entrance to this hall has 6"-square dark red tiles, similar to the northeast tower entrance.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: In the upper part of the tower, walls are generally common bond, unpainted brick, with header rows every six or seven courses. Sometimes there are two or three header rows in succession. Walls here are 32" thick at the second level. HABS  
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In the nave, the walls are plaster, painted cream, with stone arches, piers, colonnettes below the trusses, and a molding course below the clerestory windows, all of gray-brown sandstone. At the south end, the triumphal arch and the altar arch are also sandstone. The ceiling of the nave is supported by four scissor trusses with center posts. The roof is composed of side plates, three rafters per side, and a ridge beam. The four spaces created between the rafters on each side are filled with diagonal boarding, which forms a sort of chevron pattern.

In the side aisles the walls are also plaster, with the trusses for the ceiling supported on projecting molded stone consoles at the outer walls and the nave capitals at the inner side. The ceiling, which slopes up toward the nave and is broken at each window by a dormer projection, is also boarded (3" wide, 1 bead). In the entrance hall (northeast corner) the walls are plaster but there is a modern wood wainscoting 34-1/2" tall. Around the pointed entrance door there is a flush stone enframingent 11" wide. Although plastered, the ceiling has a wooden trap door about 4' square with 3"-wide, single-bead boarding, which provides access up to the belfry. The second and third floors have similar doors.

In the transept section and altar area the ceilings are of diagonal boarding similar to the aisles and nave.

The small vestry to the west of the choir is remodeled, with modern wall and ceiling paneling.

Keith Hall has plaster walls painted tan, with the four roof trusses supported at the ends by molded stone consoles. This ceiling may originally have been open trusses and boarding similar to the nave; now there is a hung wood ceiling. The two sloping sides are beaded boarding running east-west, while the flat center portion runs north-south. This is also painted tan, and now has acoustical tile blocks spaced about two feet apart, attached to this boarding.

5. Doorways and doors: The two lancet north doors to the nave have heavy exposed framing on the inside. The west door has 1-1/2" framing; the east door (in the tower vestibule) has 2-1/2"-thick framing. Both have vertical



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boarding on the outside. The west door has an inner set of two-leaf swinging doors covered with dark red imitation leather. This inner door is also in a pointed opening. In the northeast vestibule are two inner doors--one to the east aisle, and one into the rear of the nave. Both are two-leaf pointed doors, covered in red imitation leather. The simple wood enframingent is stained dark brown. The east door from the south end of the east aisle onto 31st Street is similar to the door on the west end of the front facade, and also has similar inner doors. The door from the west side of the transept into the passage to Keith Hall is a two-leaf vertically boarded door, with a Tudor-arch top. The south side of the door has two panels. The door from this passage into Keith Hall itself is old (and has old hinges), but now is covered on both sides with soundproofing. Another narrow door from the very east end of the altar area into the entrance lobby of the former parish hall is similarly soundproofed. The eastern vestibule of Keith Hall is 5' square, and is entered from 31st Street by a two-leaf Tudor-arch doorway with doors similar to those on the north of the church. It has vertical boarding and chamfered rails and stiles, but appears to be later than the others in the church. Each leaf has two panels; the lower one with X-bracing. All other doors are modern.

6. Decorative features and trim: The most striking feature inside the church is the series of German stained-glass windows. In the east aisle there are four windows; in the west aisle, five. All of these are double lancet, with a uniform architectural motif and inscription in the two lower panels. In the main part of the window, above, is the figural scene--continuous from one panel to the other except in the northernmost of the west aisle, which has two separate scenes. Surmounting this, in the apex of each lancet, is an architectural canopy. At the apex, between the two lancets, is an additional light in the form of a quatrefoil, with rosettes and flowers. With the exception noted above, all the windows depict scenes involving the life of Christ. At the north end of the nave are three tall lancets. These are similar to the side windows in design, though taller, and show scenes in the life of Christ. The side lancets have two vertical lights; the central, three. Above the central window is a round bull's-eye window with the Agnus Dei. The clerestory windows in the nave all depict individual male or female saints. There are twelve on the east (three per bay) and fifteen on the west (three per bay). Above the altar at the south end are three single lancets showing the angel at Christ's tomb in the center, and a

woman in each of the side windows. At the east end of the transept section is another stained-glass window, a large lancet in three vertical sections depicting the Virgin and Child, with figures of Hope and Faith at the sides. In the south gable above the triumphal arch is a small round window depicting the dove of the Holy Spirit.

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Another prominent decorative feature is the carving of the capitals in the nave. These are of robust floral design, all rather similar. On the east side there are three; on the west side, four. At the north and south ends of the arches, the last arch is supported at the wall by a curious bracket or console. This console is composed of two columns about 6" in diameter, whose two capitals together are the same width as the single, but larger, capitals of the nave, and whose lower ends curl up against the wall. On the nave side of each main pier is a tall colonnette which extends up to support the roof trusses. These terminate in floral caps similar to the nave columns. In the aisles, the truss ends rest on molded consoles at the wall and the nave capitals on the inside.

Below the clerestory windows is a molding course running the length of the nave. On the east side only this terminates in a floral block at the north end. At the north end of the nave are several commemorative tablets.

A large baptismal font of marble (octagonal in shape, 24" across) is near the northeast corner.

The nave pews are original. These are made of dark wood with a simple scroll at the arm ends. Each pew has a shield-shaped number plaque of white porcelain with numbers in black and gold.

In the transept section, and altar area, are other decorative features. The triumphal arch and the two aisle arches have floral caps and colonettes. The two aisle arches to the transept section are closed by wrought-iron two-leaf gates. At this end of the nave there is also a handsome brass eagle lectern (1885) to the west; and to the east an elaborate brass pulpit (of about the same date), decorated on the front with a large winged angel. The choir stalls and two principal chairs in the transept area are Gothic in design, with finials and tracery.

The most sumptuous decoration of all, however, is the carved wooden retable against the south wall of the altar area. The retable has a carved tracery dado about 4-1/2'

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high; above that, in the center, is a wooden aedicula containing a brass cross and, in the tympanum above, a carved winged putto head. Two narrower niches flank the aedicula on the left and right. In the niches on the left are wooden statues of Matthew and Mark; on the right, Luke and John. Each statue--with its attribute at its feet--is 29" tall, excluding the base. On the base of the statue of St. John is a small metal plaque which reads: "Mayer & Co. Munich/royal eccles. art establisht." with a royal crest to the left. Between the paired lancets on each side is a carved panel of grapes and wheat. At either end of this section is a carved standing angel. All of these figures stand on low columns. At the extreme ends of the retable are carved, low-relief panels showing four music-making angels. Those on the east end hold a lute and triangle; those on the west, a sackbut and harp. On the east and west sides of the altar area are carved stalls of similar design. The four on the east side, although simpler, have a tall pier at each end capped with finials and an angel. (One of the angels, on a column about 6'-6" from the ground, has been stolen.) The grouping on the west side is more elaborate. Here, four stalls flank a central section composed of a shelf supported by a winged angel's head, and above, a sculpted scene of two disciples receiving communion from Christ. The canopy over the sculptures is crowned with finials and two angels. In niches above the stalls on the left, the Ten Commandments appear on two brass plaques; and, similarly, on the right, the Lord's Prayer. At each end of this stall grouping, 6'-6" from the ground, is a column base for an angel (both angels have been stolen). Since the ends of the altar stalls overlap the ends of the retable somewhat awkwardly, it may be that the retable and the stalls were made separately and then put together here.

The altar table itself is a handsomely carved piece. The openings around it form a miniature Gothic cloister. The altar rail is supported by brass floral balusters.

In Keith Hall the only decorative features are the molded consoles for the roof trusses.

7. Notable hardware: The interior strap hinges of the major doors are of simple design. On the north facade, the westernmost door has two 30"-long hinges with trefoil ends for each leaf. At the east door, the ends are pointed. Hinges for the doors to Keith Hall are original, with etched floral decoration on the inner plate. Hollow brass door knobs are plain. Original ward locks are still in place here.

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8. Lighting: A plaque in the church indicates that the structure had been wired for electricity--including the illumination of the exterior--by December 1911. The present light fixtures of the nave are hanging hexagonal tubes of Gothic design, arranged in two rows of four. The side aisles have similar hanging fixtures, three in the east aisle and four in the west. Other lighting is modern. Some braided wiring, which may date from the original installation, is to be found in the tower.
9. Heating: Gas-heated hot water. The building was completely air conditioned in 1964. There is one old heating or ventilating grate in the passage to the parish hall from the church. The grate measures 9-3/4" by 13-3/4" and is 10-3/4" from the floor. Its grating is in a pierced curvilinear pattern.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Christ Church is located on the southwest corner of 31st and O Streets, N.W., with the front entrance facing north.
2. Enclosures: A low twentieth-century iron fence at the sidewalk line surrounds the church on both east and north sides, running about four feet from the wall of the church. West of the building is a recent flagged garden with a high brick wall on the north and west.
3. Outbuildings: None.
4. Walks: On the east, an asphalt block pavement (with squares eight inches on a side) extends ten feet from the iron fence to the bluestone curb. On the north there is a concrete public walk, which is also ten feet wide.
5. Landscaping: Between the iron fence and the church--a space of about four feet--evergreen hedges grow to the height of the fence.

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Commission of Fine Arts  
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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were made in 1969 during a project to record 14 structures and a group of 16 items of "street furniture" in the Georgetown section of Washington, D. C. The project was conducted by the Commission of Fine Arts with the cooperation of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The resulting documentation was donated to HABS by the Commission and published in 1970 in HABS Selections Number 10, Georgetown Architecture: Northwest Washington, District of Columbia.

The project was under the direction of Mr. Charles H. Atherton, Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer of the Commission of Fine Arts. The recording team was composed of Miss Ellen J. Schwartz and Mr. Daniel D. Reiff, Architectural Historians, and Mr. William P. Thompson, Architect. The photographs were made by photographers J. Alexander and Jack E. Boucher under contract to the Commission.